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8 January 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

THROUGH : Chief, Operations School

SUBJECT : Course Report - Chiefs of Station Seminar No. 1
30 November - 18 December 1964

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1. The first running of the Chiefs of Station Seminar was given from 30 November through 18 December 1964, half days except for one full weekend at [] and with two days of Open End on 21 and 22 December. The class, held in Room 1A-07, Headquarters Building, consisted of fourteen officers, nine of whom were scheduled for early field assignments: five as COS, three as DCOS, and the other as Chief of Support in Saigon (see roster, Attachment A). Four had previously held jobs as either COS or DCOS, and three as COB. Two of the class [] had just completed the National Interdepartmental Seminar.

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2. Since this was the first running, the course was inevitably a little tentative, not so much in its basic objective (to teach an outgoing COS what he ought to know) as in the detailed way this objective should be bodied forth. Most generally, the choice had to be made between (a) setting up a super Senior Operations Course, and (b) focusing upon the managerial, policy, coordination, and representational aspects of the COS job. This is not a matter of inclusion/exclusion but of emphasis, since neither general range of responsibility can realistically be excluded. In effect, the operational aspect was the less emphasized and was presented mainly through case histories, rather than in any effort to propound doctrine or teach techniques. The detailed course objectives as they appear in the OTR Bulletin announcement indicate this choice:

a. Formation of U.S. policy and how it affects the Chief of Station.

b. Problems of relationship among U.S. government agencies in Washington and in the field.

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c. Support and direction of stations and demands upon stations from Headquarters desks and staffs.

d. Management of station operations and personnel.

e. The Chief of Station and his handling of station administration.

f. The Chief of Station as representative of all the Agency.

g. How the station's product fits into Agency and intelligence community requirements and patterns of use.

Even with the operational side thus soft-pedaled, what remained was a very large order for covering in a total period of only some 76 hours.

3. The basic reasoning on the basis of which we decided to accentuate the policy/administrative and skim over the operational was as follows: (a) Nobody is likely to become a COS nowadays unless he has at least some operational skills, whether these have accumulated through experience or were originally gained through training. (b) Operational training, if conducted at all, had better be conducted intensively, and that meant more time than we could conceivably devote to it, given the parameters we inherited from the predecessor [] Program Planning Course. (c) If senior officers need basic operational training or reminder courses (and very likely many of them do), they should get them in other courses more directly responsive to their particular needs: Either a specific course in some area of operations, such as covert action or counter-intelligence, or a general across-the-board refresher such as the Advanced Operations Seminar due to be run for the first time starting 11 January 1965. (d) A questionnaire we used to find out how COS's spend their time and what they worried over most disclosed that the managerial side of things (including management of operations and processing the product of operations) far outweighed any range of activities involving personal operational skills.

4. The course was carried on through a combination of individual speakers and panels of various sizes. The difficulties of maintaining any sort of rational continuity while relying upon a succession of invited speakers, all busy men with many overwhelming preoccupations, were especially formidable in this first running, simply because we

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did not have enough lead-time to let us fiddle around with the schedule extensively. This should be easier in later runnings, though the problem of the speaker who suddenly fades out because he has to recruit a classmate in Timbuktu or brief the President on his very own revolution can never be altogether resolved, let alone that of the willing and stable fellow who just gets sick.

5. Participation by leading officers of the Agency was exemplary. The DD/P gave the course a resounding classified advertisement in his weekly staff meeting, and he gave the final session of the course. The ADD/P gave the first day's feature presentation; the DD/I talked for a fascinating hour and a half; five division and two office chiefs gave presentations themselves, sometimes sharing the podium with lesser lights; and at least twenty-two former COS's addressed the group at one time or another. In addition, we had fine cooperation from outside the Agency, hearing from Ambassador Sam Berger, now on the faculty of the National War College; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]; Mr. Dick Sanger of the State Department and the National Interdepartmental Seminar; and Mr. George Carroll of the Defense Department. Finally, [REDACTED] Deputy Director of Training, monitored practically the entire course, giving us a ready reservoir of remarkably varied experience to call upon as necessary during question periods, and especially during the intensive weekend down at [REDACTED] which incidentally was a great success.

6. Since this was the first running, all participants were sworn in as Honorary Deputies in the OTR posse and the course had an elaborate critique system. Daily critiques were submitted, and these were Xeroxed every day and passed back to be used as refresher material when the Final Critiques were written. On the basis of these, as well as discussions with several participants, the course is going to be revamped in considerable detail as well as in certain aspects of its basic structure. The course schedule is Attachment B.

7. Members of the course were also adjured to keep their eyes open for any points of doctrine or any other suggestions for the Clandestine Services that might emerge from the class discussions. Several did, and these are listed in Attachment C.

8. Judging from the final critiques, the course was highly successful for a first running. A few sample remarks will give some idea: "The course . . . was conceptually sound and of considerable

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benefit to me. I did learn things I had not known before and I feel better equipped to do a satisfactory job in the field, which, I presume, meets your principal objectives." [redacted] "... with remarkably few exceptions, all speakers were clear, informative, and interesting. Virtually all concentrated on the practical aspects of the job - the type of information most wanted by those attending the seminar. The happy inspiration of adding [redacted] and Ambassador Berger effectively relieved the emphasized practicality and viewed the job from a broader perspective - an important requirement." ([redacted] "In general, the course was fascinating, the speakers well chosen, and the objectives . . . fully accomplished." [redacted] "Finally, in addition to being useful, it was fun." [redacted] It would be more intellectually satisfactory if we could devise some objective method of evaluating the course - as distinguished from grading the participants - but the job of a COS is so diffuse and variant that it is difficult to envision any such test. Perhaps the only one will be how well the course students perform over the years, in the light of the challenges they come to face.

9. The experience of this first running is already being put to use as the second running (starting 23 February) and the third (starting 19 April) are in the planning phase. We also plan further experimentation beyond what might be achieved merely by surgery of the less lively portions of the first session. Especially, we hope to work up one or two really good illustrative case studies. By the end of that third session, the COS Seminar should be thoroughly shaken down. One aspect of this is institutionalizing the course as a regular element in the processing of senior field personnel. We are inclined to doubt, however, that this is best accomplished by requiring attendance; and inclined to think that unless the course compels attendance because of its interest and its usefulness it had better expire.

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[redacted]
Chief Instructor

Attachments:

- A. Student Roster
- B. Course Schedule
- C. Student Suggestions

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